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**Columnist**

## Professional Development

### More tips on network marketing

What do AT&T, Microsoft, Gillette, CitiBank, Toyota, IBM, Xerox, General Motors, AOL, and Coca-Cola have in common besides being large corporations? According to Mike Sherman, Independent Marketing Representative for Champion Communications, they all use some form of network marketing to sell their products and services.

Sherman and Dr. Hank Aldredge, also a Champion IMR, recently gave me some excellent tips on how to succeed at network (or multi-level) marketing. Last time I shared some of those ideas with you and would like to give you the rest of them here.

Both Sherman and Aldredge stress that “selling” people on buying your products or joining the business with you doesn’t work. And it’s no use getting upset when someone turns you down. The most important thing to keep in mind is, “You’re looking for people who are looking for you.” Your aim is to help people get what they want and have a better life. Here are some ways to do that for them, and reap rewards for yourself.

**Talk to a lot of people.** There’s an old saying in sales that it’s a numbers game. Common sense tells us that the more people we talk to, the more we increase our chances of getting a customer or finding someone who will come into the business with us. If you are passionate about your product or service and like talking to people, you’re already ahead of the game.

**Ask questions, listen, and feedback what people say.** But first, temper your passion and enthusiasm, and be careful not to sell or even tell about your product or business before you find out if the person wants or needs what you have to offer. You do that by asking them questions that draw out their innermost desires. Do they have a problem or challenge they’d like to fix or do they not want to do anything about it at this time? Ask curious questions then truly listen to their answers. Base your next question on what they just said; don’t listen half-heartedly while thinking about the next thing you’re going to ask or say. Feedback what they say by repeating it to make sure you understood them, then move on to telling them how you might be able to help them with a solution.

**Don’t sell; build relationships.** People buy from people they like. They like people who sincerely care about them and desire to help and understand them, people

who treat them the way they want to be treated. You can't fake this. People know if you care about them or only want to make a sale. Sherman and Aldredge both stress this is probably the most important tip they have to offer. Genuinely care about people and it will show. Combine this with being passionate about your business and product and you'll make more sales.

**Don't get pushy.** This probably goes without saying, but many people still attempt to force their enthusiasm on others and try to pressure them into buying. I can't imagine anyone being successful using this technique.

**Work more on sponsoring other IMRs than on getting customers.** Not everyone agrees with this advice, but Aldredge and Sherman both feel this is important to becoming a successful network marketer. The way to make the most money in an MLM is to build your down line and get as many people working under you as you can. Duplicate yourself. Those in the business will be more loyal to the company and its products or services than those who only buy from you. Customers will leave you for a better deal, but IMRs will stay, unless they don't follow this last tip:

**Don't give up and quit too soon.** I've heard several experienced network marketers say many people fail because they quit just before they were about to make a breakthrough. I don't know how they know this, but they're probably right. Network marketing isn't easy even if you have the most exciting, necessary product in the world.

Do your homework on the company and its products and follow these tips to increase your chances for success. It's 99% attitude.

When you get discouraged, which you will at times, remember what one Champion executive told me, "SW, SW, SW – N!" Some will, some won't, so what – NEXT!

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